

Flower Selling, Horse Races, and Phonetics - MHS's *My Fair Lady*

- Kathleen Alexandrou

“The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain.” A phrase made famous by one of the most well-known musicals in the world, this saying about the weather in Spain has educated many young people on how to properly speak in a Cockney accent. However, Eliza Doolittle’s version is far more fun to say: “The rine in Spine falls mainly on the pline.”

In the classic musical *My Fair Lady*, Eliza is a common flower girl who wanders the streets of London selling her flowers. One day she meets two gentlemen: Colonel Pickering, a retired military colonel, and Professor Henry Higgins, a phonetics teacher. Eliza’s terrible accent is preventing her from her dream of opening a flower shop, so she goes to the Professor and asks for lessons. Higgins agrees to educate her only after making a bet with Colonel Pickering: Higgins has six months to turn Eliza into a proper lady, after which she will be presented at the Embassy Ball. If he fails, Higgins claims that Eliza will be put to death. Eliza’s spirit and strong personality pull her through the next six months of grueling language lessons that sometimes last until three o’clock in the morning. But does Higgins succeed? Will Eliza make it through the Embassy Ball?

Over the past two months, Marblehead High School students have been working on their production of *My Fair Lady*. With rehearsals almost as lengthy as Eliza’s lessons, the cast and crew have put together an astounding show. Starring junior Ilana DeAngelo as Eliza Doolittle and senior Andrew Dalton as Henry Higgins, MHS’s *My Fair Lady* got a full house and a standing ovation on opening night. DeAngelo’s voice is incredible; every time she sang the audience was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. Malachi Rosen (Freddy Eynsford-Hill) enchanted all, even though it’s a little creepy that he wants to sit outside Eliza’s house and “drink in the street where she lives.” Stephen Girard (junior) plays Colonel Pickering so well that you forget he’s acting. The ensemble transitions beautifully from playing London’s poor to servants in Higgins’s house to the cream of London society. Under the experienced direction of Henry Dembowski, the cast of *My Fair Lady* truly became Londoners living in Edwardian England. But acting alone does not make a show. The technical elements of *My Fair Lady* are also quite good. The set is simple, yet elegant, and the set changes were “seamless.” Stage manager Emily Kauffman (senior), with the help of Kaitlyn Nohelty (junior), ensures that everything runs smoothly; it is because of them that the show goes on each night. Jordan Mitchell (senior) and Kathleen Alexandrou (sophomore) designed the lights for the show, and Olivia Maerz (sophomore) and Jake Emerick (junior) did the sound. With all that talent working behind the scenes, it’s no surprise that *My Fair Lady* turned out so well.

So back to the question posed earlier: will Higgins and Eliza come out on top? I’m afraid there’s only one way to answer that. You must come see MHS’s *My Fair Lady*. There are two more performances, one on Friday, 11/20, at 7:00 P.M. and one on Sunday, 11/22, at 3:00 P.M. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, and \$10 for students. Though this production is put on by high schoolers, it is a show for everyone. So please, come to the Nelson Aldrich Performing

Arts Center at MVMS this weekend to enjoy an evening of music, culture, and the English language.